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veniently arranged to be away from home. The villagers occasionally joked about the peasant who climbed a tree to escape the tax collector and had to remain in that uncomfortable predicament for many hours before the visitor left. But the Turks did recognize the traditional form of village government, or government by elders, and let the heads of the zadrugas, or large joint families, run village affairs to their liking. Most of the time, the head of the zadruga had to accept the responsibility for the deeds of all members of his family group.

These zadrugas were little principalities guided by a *stopanin,* usually the oldest male. His word was law; he distributed the work among the men, bought the necessities, sold the produce, and represented the zadruga before the outside world; therefore, the zadruga usually bore his name. Whenever a son, brother, or nephew of the *stopanin* married, he brought his wife back home to become a member of his zadruga. The wife of the *stopanin,* known as the *domakinya,* managed the housework. She kept the women busy making bread, cooking, washing, spinning, and weaving. Everything was owned in common. Work too was done in common, and whatever one earned outside was turned over to the *stopanin* for the common treasury. In return, all the members got clothes and food, which in those days were about all they expected to have.

After the death of the *stopanin,* the members met to select the next most capable male as their leader. At times, the *domakinya* took over the position of responsibility. Such was doubtless what happened in the case of Baba Dragana, or her prototype, since the ending of the word Dragalevtsy would indicate that it had been settled by a zadruga. The old joint family comprised married cousins descended from the same ancestor, with the result that it sometimes numbered as many as one hundred people.

When the older Dragalevtsy peasants talked to me of the zadruga, which persisted as late as 1880 in their village, they showed that wistfulness for the past which runs through the works of many Bulgarian writers. The zadruga was supposed to be a source of plenty and happiness to its members. One aged peasant listed for me the advantages of this joint family over the modern family. First of all, he said, it had great economy. The members had only one lamp,

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642 666 vibrant youth and living hope, her fling at democracy failed, primarily because ballots were given to peasants who were not being taught the meaning of citizenship in a national state.

178 623 Those interested in democracy have much to learn from the story of government in Dragalevtsy. At the outset the informal rule of the elders, which had been recognized by the Turks, was replaced by a commune or *obshtina* with regularly elected officials. At first these units included a number of villages. By 1890 the increase in population necessitated the breaking up of the larger *obshtini* so as to include only two or three villages. In other words, the pendulum was swinging back in the direction of greater local control, the swing being further accentuated after the First World War.

665 Political parties grew like mushrooms in Bulgaria. In 1930 the country had more than sixteen significant parties; in the village of Dragalevtsy, with its total population of about sixteen hundred, there [557] were six important parties with recognized leaders and platforms. To be a party leader in the village meant added prestige; to be one in the city or on a national scale meant power. In order for a Dragalevtsy man to become a local party leader he had to be acquainted with important people in Sofia. Even though he had only one influential friend in the city, he could persuade this man to come out and help organize a party. Other peasants were invited to the organizational meeting and officers were elected. Naturally, the one who took the initiative would be chosen to an important post. Because of the multiplicity of parties and the intense strife among them, many people throughout the country breathed a sigh of relief when the authoritarian government, which came into power on May 19, 1934, abolished by decree all political parties and started the practice of appointing university graduates as mayors in villages. This meant that the head of the government in a village was not dependent upon the will of the populace but had to produce results satisfactory to the officials over him. The breakdown of the party system was associated, especially as far as the conservative peasant population was concerned, not only with forces outside the village but also with the failure of popular education to develop into "a bulwark of people rule."

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623 Local administration of justice was not the only thing the mayor had changed. Upon his arrival in Dragalevtsy he had replaced the traditional Village Council, composed of peasants, with an Advisory Council, made up of other public officials. Later, when the national authorities wanted to restore the appearance of representative government they worked out a scheme for establishing a new Commune Council. They took care, however, to rid it of any candidates that they did not like.

666 623 On March 28, 1937, six councilors were elected for the Dragalevtsy commune: three from Dragalevtsy proper, two from Simeonovo, and one from the "quarter" near Sofia. In addition to these six, the following were ex officio members of the council: the mayor, the representative of merchants, the representative of the agricultural zadruga, the director of the school, the physician, and the veterinarian. To obtain its three members, the village of Dragalevtsy was divided into three districts, from each of which one representative was chosen. Any man over thirty and with an elementary school education who signed the following petition could nominate himself as a candidate for office.

To the Judge of the Commune
in the village of_____
County _____

PETITION

With this I wish to declare:

1. that I wish to offer my candidacy for a village councilor in the elections which will take place on _____ 19__ for the purpose of electing members of the commune councils.
2. that I offer my candidacy in _____ elective district of _____ commune _____ county.
3. that I do not belong to any secret or open organization forbidden by the laws of the country.
4. that I do not have ideas against the government, that I am not in favor of communist, anarchist or violent methods for social and political struggles.
5. that if I am elected as a commune councilor I will not favor any class, society, groups, nor will I serve my personal interests, and in my work I shall be guided by the common interests of the commune of which I am a member, and

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6. that I have been registered under No._____ in the election list of the commune.
I wish to have my candidacy recognized as legal and confirmed.
I enclose certificate No._____ from _____ 19__ year issued from _____ commune, which shows that:
(a) I have the right to elections (commune elections)
(b) that I am 30 years of age and have completed my military service (or the regular labor service)
(c) that I have completed _____ (education)
Village, City _____ year 19__

Respectfully:_____

The names of those wishing to run were posted publicly by the mayor; all the villagers had the opportunity to contest the fitness of any candidate; afterwards the mayor sent the names to Sofia with his own recommendations. The final decision was in the hands of the judge in Sofia. Thirteen Dragalevtsy men decided to stand for election. Three of these were rejected by the authorities. People from each district voted only for a candidate from their district. Mothers were the only women permitted to vote.

Before the election, with the permission of the mayor, the candidates were allowed to make speeches. After the election, as is frequently the case in countries elsewhere, some people were dissatisfied with the results and demanded a new election. However, everything seemed to go off in an orderly way and the voting was fairly done. This election, though, was the prelude to the national elections which were later held, resulting in the restoration, after a fashion, of the *Subranie,* or National Parliament.

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Re-establishing a commune council seemed to be a very complicated affair to the average peasant, and afforded quite a contrast to his usual way of getting things done. In order to fulfill the law requiring ex officio members to represent the merchants and the agriculturists, two new organizations had to be started in the village before the time of the election. The merchants organized a Merchants' Association, had one or two meetings, elected a representative, and discussed general policies for the future. Although nothing definite had taken shape by the time I left the village, the merchants hoped to

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623 441 241 practice price-fixing, standardization of products, and the like. The representative appointed by the merchants was Ivan Katsarov, previously mentioned as a manager of one of the village taverns who appeared as a plaintiff in court. Furthermore, the farmers had to organize themselves into an association called a zadruga (which had no connection with the old form of joint family known by that name). Such organizations followed the Italian system of corporations under the Fascist regime and insured representation in government on the basis of occupation rather than political preference. These agricultural zadrugas worked well in theory around the council tables in Sofia, but met with resistance in the village. In the opinion of many leaders of co-operatives, the zadrugas ran counter to the strong co-operative movement which had already made such headway in Bulgaria. Their critics point out they not only struck at the very foundation of this movement, but also had the fault of being handed down from above instead of springing from natural needs in the village itself.

623 Should there have been a number of industrial laborers in the village they too would have had an ex officio member on the council. The presence of the other ex officio members on the council was easily understood. The doctors, the school director, and the mayor were expected by the national authorities to take an active part in deciding the policies of the village government. Such a council, in spite of the great furor connected with its formation, was still an advisory rather than a governing body.

In order to get a better understanding of the way government affected the life of the individual peasant, I sought answers to several questions.

651 *How were the taxes paid?* On February 25, July 25, and October 25, people were supposed to come to the *Obshtina* and pay taxes. Those who did not show up were summoned by the courier. If this summons went unheeded, the individuals were sent red notices reminding them that they had to pay within three or four days. If they failed to do this, the *Sekretar Birnik* made out a list of their possessions for a public sale which was held if the taxes remained unpaid. There had been several instances where goods were actually sold for failure to pay taxes, much to the shame of the people involved.